The Montgomery County Library Board (MCLB)

Annual Report 2008

MC PL **Montgomery County**
PUBLIC LIBRARIES
Where the County *READS*.....*MEETS*.....*LEARNS*

21 Maryland Avenue, Suite 310, Rockville, Maryland 20850

The State of the Montgomery County Library Board
2008
Lois H. Neuman, PhD, Chair

This report demonstrates how the Montgomery County Library Board (MCLB) meets the County Executive, Director, and Internal MCLB Priorities.

HOW THE MCLB CONTRIBUTES TO COUNTY EXECUTIVE PRIORITES

We Are Relevant and Vital for All of Our Residents

The Library Board remains current on reports, studies, and needs of patrons to keep our local system relevant and vital.

- Library customers in Montgomery County are using libraries now more than ever. In addition to online and digital resources, libraries find that the demand for traditional services has also increased because online technologies make it possible for people to know more about what is available at libraries and how to obtain materials.
- We liaison with our Disability Resource Center-Library Advocacy Committee to ensure access for all of our residents regardless of point-of-access: on-site, telephone, postal mail, or computer. We consider access in all MCLB ventures.
- We attend meetings of our local Library Advisory Committees (LAC) to keep informed on local issues such as the need for English as a Second Language materials, security concerns, program needs, etc.
- We are visible and articulate the message of libraries to multiple audiences.

Children Prepared to Live & Learn

- We maintain contact with the Montgomery County Public Schools through one of our Board Members who represents the MCPS.
- We visit events at the libraries:
  - The libraries have an active student presence during after-school hours.
  - Young mothers bring their babies and check out conveniently prepackaged materials for specific age groups.
  - Over 1,900 pre-school programs, attended by more than 71,000.
  - Summer Reading Program for 2008 had over 29,000 participants.
  - Montgomery County Literacy Council, founded in 1969, (50% County funded, and housed at the new Rockville Library) taught more than 800 persons per year how to read and write, using MCPL space.

Healthy & Sustainable Communities

- Libraries are open and staffed despite budget decreases.
- We spread the word about our library system when we speak to residents in our own communities about library use.
  - Circulation was up 3.75% in FY08 over FY07
  - Over 6,400 programs presented in FY08
    - Over 1,500 English Conversation Club programs (NACO award-winner)
    - More than 600,000 registered card holders

- More than 9 million visits in FY08
- 89% of surveyed users visit the library at least monthly
- We visit all of the library branches and can attest to the many members of the community who meet, interact, and complete work at the library.
- We listen and observe at each branch and LAC and bring back concerns to the Director and the Library Board.

An Efficient and Effective Transportation Network

As the county continues to solve transportation concerns, the library offers a viable alternative by allowing residents to visit electronically. We observe the many residents who use the computers in libraries.

- Virtually open to the public 24/7 via content-rich and service-rich web-site; on-line telephone renewal; and email, chat and telephone reference.
- 610,340 information questions answered in FY08 by skilled and dedicated public servants.
- MCPL website is the most visited site of the Montgomery County site, at over 2 millions visits per year.
- Implemented on-line library card application.

Strong and Vital Economy

We encourage customers to come to the libraries to obtain information and get help in finding jobs or build professional skills, address significant life issues (finance, health, business, etc.), E-Government transactions, all which contribute to economic development. The 472 Public Access Internet Computers loaded with office productivity software and Internet access supports this outreach. Upgraded select Wi-Fi installations increased capacity.

Responsive & Accountable County Government

- We testify at Budget Forums, attend meetings with the County Council, and speak to the value of tax supported, open-access, and public libraries at numerous venues.
- We write proactive or reactionary letters and position statements as needed.

Affordable Housing in an Inclusive Community

Within the community, the library system stands ready to provide services to residents by offering free and open access to all.

Safe Streets & Secure Neighborhoods

The library system contributes to safety of our communities and neighborhoods through expanded hours and open doors such as the successful implementation of additional service hours on Sundays. The library is a safe haven with rules, expected behaviors, and activities to attract patrons. Services are available across language, culture, age, gender, and accessibility. The library continues active participation in County Positive Youth Development, Early Literacy, 311, and Senior Service.

HOW THE MCLB CONTRIBUTES TO THE DIRECTOR OF MCPLS PRIORITES

MCPL Strategic Plan 2007 – 2010
The Library Board gives input on each of the MCPL Strategic Plan components:
- Focus - Readiness for the Future: innovating services and programs, partnerships, advocacy and stewardship, facilities renovation and construction
- Focus - Enhanced Technology and Innovation: electronic content, core technologies, virtual branch, and electronic services.
- Focus - Marketing/Outreach/Community Awareness: increasing awareness to the "Check Us Out" Quarterly Program Guide, increasing service hour on Sundays, providing service outside our walls, market research.
- Focus - Continuous Organizational Development: staff development, recruitment, organizational structure, focus on customer service and innovation

Implementing the Strategic Plan
In our role as Liaison to our Library Advisory Committees (LACs), we attend meetings and hear concerns from the members. The Board shares the concerns and advises the Director on the following areas.
Readiness for the Future
- service hours, technology, programs, training, and administrative infrastructure.
- provide services to those customers who are unable to come on-site such as the homebound, disabled, or seniors.
- comments received from our LACs about security and safety
- keep our facilities as a source of pride for our residents
- maintenance and renovation needs within the 21 libraries and ways to keep all facilities current and fully functional

Enhanced Technology and Innovation
- use of the website, computers, and electronic services

Marketing through communication and contact with stakeholders in the County to reinforce our mission and value to the community
- share information about programs in Early Literacy, Children's Service Young Adult programming, services for Seniors, new Americans, and language learners

Continuous Organization Development
- elevate our placement in national library system rankings.
- continue to adjust our materials collection within economic constraints.
- monitor customer satisfaction

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD PRIORITES

Reflect the Diversity that is Montgomery County
- Represent of a cross section of Montgomery County residents by age, culture, gender, language, and ethnicity.
- Interact with multiple community groups across age, culture, gender, economic status, educational background or geographical location.

2009: Improve Service Capabilities

Marketing, Outreach, Community Awareness

- In 2007-2008, the Year of the LAC, at the request of the Board, the 21 Library Advisory Committees (LAC) came to Board meetings, gave a presentation, ranked priorities, and identified strengths and areas in need of improvement. After data analysis, the Board produced a 2008 *Report of the Library Advisory Committee Presentations* that included findings, trends, priorities, and strategies. Anecdotally, LAC members stated that this was the first time they were asked to spend time with the Board and to offer suggestions that they identified as important to their own library customers and branch.
- As part of the 2008-2009 Plan and in response to the Best Practices and Suggested Improvements section from the 2008 *Report of the Library Advisory Committee Presentations*, the Board
    - o distributed LAC recruitment brochures to each LAC to support volunteer member recruitment and retention and empower LAC members to have a voice in improving services to patrons. The document explains the purpose, function and activities of LACs and provides contact information to obtain additional information and join.
    - o expanded our LAC Award Program to acknowledge and recognize the commitment and contributions of the LAC members and to celebrate Volunteerism.
    - o conducted the first Annual Library Board/Library Advisory Committee (MCPLB/LAC) Conference on June 12, 2008 and welcomed participation by the County Executive and other County officials. The program included speakers, breakout sessions, and a LAC award ceremony.
    - o created a Montgomery County Library Board Bulletin with monthly announcements for the LACs and other interested library supporters that will initially be produced in printed copy and subsequently distribute by electronic version on the website.
    - o expanded and improved the website to include the Montgomery County Library Board Bulletin, LAC Award Application, Calendar of Events, LAC Recruitment Brochure, and LAC Priority Report.

Future Plans

Readiness for the Future

- Continue to develop responses to the Best Practices and Suggested Improvements section from the 2008 *Report of the Library Advisory Committee Presentations*
- Raise the MCPLS excellence rankings on objective indicators, such as the national Hennen ranking
- Expand the visibility of the MCPLS in the region, county, state, country, and globally on-site and electronically by regularly adding pertinent information to our website for easy retrieval and archival storage.
- Increase volunteer membership and community participation in the Library Advisory Committees.
- Reinvent and refresh the structure of the Library Board/LAC Annual Conference as needed. Invite vibrant, exciting speakers and offer interesting topics. Celebrate the outstanding endeavors of the LACs and Volunteerism. Offer the opportunity for an exchange of LAC flyers, posters, and other materials across all branches.
- Videotape and show the Annual Conference on Access Montgomery TV and create a link on our website for retrieval, review, and replay. Distribute CDs of the meeting to all of the LACs.
- Build a partnership with the Montgomery College community including the librarians. The second Annual Library Board/LAC Conference will be held at Montgomery College Germantown on June 13 (the second Saturday in June). Tentative plans include rotating the conference to other College campuses for outreach and visibility.
- Obtain and distribute to the LACs an item such as a scarf, pin, cap, or armband that will identify library supporters at public forums and other advocacy events.
- Research Libraries of the Future and discuss/implement strategies appropriate for the MCPLS.
- Attend national, state and local events pertinent to library growth and seek opportunities to excel despite economy challenges facing Montgomery County and the entire United States.
- Write articles and speak on the programs, volunteer growth and activities, and other ventures, as applicable.
- Retain the outstanding ratings on the MCPLS customer service survey and expand outreach to the dedicated and loyal library community.
- Continue to provide seamless, exceptional service to the library users despite the economic downturn in our county and country.

Rahm Emanuel, President Obama's Chief of Staff told a Wall Street Journal (November, 2008) conference of top corporate chief executives: "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. Things that we had postponed for too long, that were long-term, are now immediate and must be dealt with. This crisis provides the opportunity for us to do things that you could not do before."

MCLB Mission Statement

According to Montgomery County Code Section 2-46 et seq, the Board is established as an advisory board, but it has authority on its own motion, or on reference from the County Executive, to inquire into matters affecting the County public library system and to provide guidance and advice on a wide range of library matters. Such matters include the acquisition, need for, and location of new library facilities, the adequacy and quality of book and materials collections, library policies and practices, MCPL's capital and operating budgets, services to outlying districts and personnel needs of MCPL. The Board usually makes recommendations on these issues to the County Executive through the MCPL Director.

The Library Board serves as one of the advocacy group for public libraries in Montgomery County on both local and statewide levels and is the voice of the community on library issues in the county. Even though individual Board members may use specific library facilities, the Board member's mission is to be an advocate for all libraries County-wide inclusive of the library of individual preference.

Shortly after the establishment of the MCPL Board, the Board created subcommittees to serve as advocates for library patrons called Library Advisory Committees (LACs).

Mission
The mission of the Montgomery County Library Board is to:

- function as the chief voice of the library patron community and advise the Montgomery County Executive and MCPL Director on matters related to library policy, services, and facilities.

- identify, emphasize, and work toward the resolution of, issues of concern to the Montgomery County library community.

- provide leadership in uniting and mobilizing advocates in support of public libraries

Library Board Membership
Montgomery County Maryland Public Libraries
B. Parker Hamilton, Director

Dr. Gail Bailey, MCPS
Mr. Arthur R. Brodsky
Mr. W. David Chiles
Ms. Paulette Dickerson
Ms. Althea Grey-McKenzie
Dr. Kay K. Kim
Mr. Brian S. Krantz, Vice-Chair
Ms. Gillian (Jill) Lewis
Mr. Otto E. Lewis, Jr
Dr. Lois H. Neuman, Chair
Ms. Niyati P. Pandya